

STADIUM STYLE MOTOR VEHICLE SEAT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

This application claims the benefit of Provisional Patent Application No. 60/405,453, filed August 23, 2002.

5 TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to seats for motor vehicle seats, and relates more specifically to a seat that folds to provide a flat surface.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many motor vehicles, particularly sport utility vehicles and minivans, are
10 equipped with rear seats that can be moved from a seating configuration, in which passengers can sit in the seat, to a so-called "load floor" configuration where the back support of the seat is folded downwardly to assume a horizontal orientation and thereby facilitate cargo stowage. Typically, locking mechanisms are provided for holding the seat in the seating configuration, and the locking mechanisms can be released to permit
15 moving the seat to the load floor configuration.

One example of such a design is U.S. Patent No. 6,089,641, assigned to the assignee of the present invention and hereby incorporated by reference. This patent teaches a passenger vehicle seating arrangement in which the second and third row seats fold down to form a cargo carrying platform.

20 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One aspect of the present invention is a seat assembly for a motor vehicle having a tub disposed at least partially in a floor of the vehicle. The seat assembly comprises at

least one rear leg non-releasably secured to the floor of the vehicle. The at least one rear leg is pivotable to stow the seat assembly in the tub.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a seat assembly of the type described above can be moved to a seating configuration and to a load floor
5 configuration.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an assembly of the type described above that is easy to use and cost-effective.

These and other features and advantages of the invention will become further apparent from the following detailed description of the presently preferred embodiments,
10 read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. The detailed description and drawings are merely illustrative of the invention rather than limiting, the scope of the invention being defined by the appended claims and equivalents thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic side view of a seat assembly according to the present
15 invention in an upright, use position;

FIG. 2 is a schematic side view of the seat assembly with a seat cushion folded proximate a seat back;

FIG. 3 is a schematic side view of the seat assembly in a partially rotated position;
and

20 FIG. 4 is a schematic side view of the seat assembly in a stowed position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 shows one embodiment 10 of a seat assembly according to the present invention for a motor vehicle. The seat assembly 10 includes a seatback 12 and a seat cushion 14. The seatback 12 and seat cushion 14 normally assume use positions, as shown in FIG. 1, in which the seat cushion 14 is generally horizontal and the seatback 12 is generally upright in order to support the back of an occupant. The seatback 12 includes a rear pair of legs 16 that are pivotably attached to an anchor point 18 in or slightly above a floor 20 of the vehicle. A catch 22 releasably retains at least one of the legs 16, and more generally the seatback 12, against rotation about the anchor point 18. A front pair of legs 24 are pivotably attached at their upper ends to the seat cushion 14. At their opposite lower ends, the front legs 24 are provided with structure such as a notch 26 that releasably engages a pin 28 secured in the vehicle relative to the floor 20.

FIGS. 2 and 3 show the rotation of the seat assembly 10 between its use position and a stowed position. As shown in FIG. 2, the seat cushion 14 is pivotable in any known manner from its use position toward positions more closely proximate the seat back 12. To accomplish this rotation, the front legs 24 are first unlocked by removing the notches 26 from the pins 28, and rotating the front legs in a counterclockwise direction as shown in the figures up against or at least partially within the bottom of the seat cushion 14. It should be appreciated that the front legs 24 may be biased into and/or retained in this position in any well known fashion. As shown in FIG. 3, the entire seat assembly 10 may then be rotated about the pivot 18 in a counterclockwise direction as shown. To accomplish this rotation, the rear legs 16 are first unlocked by releasing the catch 22 from a pin 30 secured in the vehicle relative to the floor 20.

FIG. 4 shows the seat assembly 10 lowered into a tub 32. The tub 32 is recessed below the level of the vehicle floor 20, and may be overlayed by a cover (not shown) when the seat assembly 10 is in use. In general, the depth of the tub 32 may be chosen to present a surface generally even with the vehicle floor 20. Thus, the tub 32 may have one
5 given depth if the rear of the seatback 12 presents the load floor, while a second, greater tub depth may be provided if the cover overlying the tub when the seat assembly is upright is also used to cover the seat assembly in the stowed position.

The present invention thus provides a seat assembly that moves between a seating configuration and a configuration allowing the presentation of a relatively flat load floor.
10 While the embodiment of the invention disclosed herein is presently considered to be preferred, various changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The scope of the invention is indicated in the appended claims, and all changes that come within the meaning and range of equivalents are intended to be embraced therein.